Is my child at risk for foot problems?

Yes, all people with diabetes are at risk. However, children do have good circulation and should have normal feeling in their feet. Healthy foot-care habits can help prevent future foot problems.

What do I need to know about foot problems and diabetes?

- Good blood sugar control can help prevent skin infections of the feet.
- Regular checks of your child’s feet and toenails at home is important.
- Proper fitting footwear can help prevent foot problems.
- Good foot care at home can help prevent foot problems such as blisters, infections, calluses and corns that can lead to more long-term problems with the feet.
- Notice foot problems early and follow up with a primary care provider.

What can I do to keep my child’s feet healthy?

- **Cut toenails** to prevent ingrown toenails and to ensure that toenails are short and clean.
  - Cut nails straight across with a toe clipper.
  - File sharp edges with an emery board.
  - Cutting into the corners can cause ingrown toenails.
- Use a pumice stone to reduce calluses.
- Check shoe size to ensure well-fitting shoes in a growing child.
- Replace shoes if they are causing calluses, blisters or pain.
- Replace shoes if soles or heels are worn out.
- Have your child wear socks with shoes to reduce sweating and blisters.
- If your child has dry areas on his feet, apply lotion daily.
- Take your child to his primary care provider or podiatrist if he has:
  - pain, swelling or drainage around the toe nail
  - dry, red, itchy rash on his feet
  - plantars wart
- Call your diabetes provider:
  - If your child complains of tingling in the feet like “pins and needles” (not when sitting on them)
  - Before using over the counter medicines for warts, corns, etc.
**What do I do if my child asks for a pedicure?**

The American Diabetes Association does not recommend pedicures because of the increased risk of infection for people with diabetes.

Many pre-teens and teens want pedicures. This is a decision for you as a parent. Be aware of the risks involved with getting a pedicure and what you can do to lessen that risk.

**Say NO to a pedicure if:**
- your child has an infection of any kind or an open cut, bug bite, bruise, scratch, scab or poison ivy. These make it possible for bacteria or fungus to enter the body and cause further complications.
- your child’s blood sugar is not in good control. High blood sugars increase the risk of infection and poor healing. If your child has neuropathy or loss of feeling in the feet, there is increase risk of harm if the bath water is too hot. This can further injure the feet.

**Use good judgment and choose a nail salon carefully.**
- Check out several salons and ask about their cleaning practices. Ask to see the cleaning solutions. The solutions should say that they are EPA registered hospital disinfectant with the words "hospital", “health care” or “medical” clearly written on them.

**Inspect the foot tub**
- Ask if it is cleaned with hospital grade disinfectant between every client.

**Inspect the tools**
- Stainless steel tools are more sanitary than wooden sticks.

**Don’t be afraid to give the nail technician instructions.**
- Let them know your child has diabetes.
- Use a water temperature of 90-95 degrees.
- Do not use razors.
- Do not use lotions between the toes.
- Be gentle.

**Your child should not shave legs, use removal creams or wax legs** for 2 days before the appointment to decrease the chances of bacteria entering nicks or cuts in the skin.